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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TEL AVIV 000756

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SUBJECT: GOI ADOPTS POST-PLC MEASURES; EFFORTS TO
COORDINATE WITH DONORS

REF: TEL AVIV 697

Classified By: Ambassador Richard H. Jones, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) Summary: Following the first meeting of the new Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), the GOI has adopted a number of measures aimed at increasing security and preventing funds from reaching Hamas, according to General Yossef Mishlev. Mishlev said the GOI will end assistance for PA security forces, immediately halt revenue transfers, rescind VIP status for PLC members, and step up physical checks of goods and people at the crossings. Mishlev is coordinating an inter-agency committee that will review the situation on a weekly basis and recommend any additional measures. He said that the GOI wants to coordinate closely with the U.S. to ensure that humanitarian assistance to the Palestinians continues without aiding the Hamas government. Post believes that the USG may be able to influence GOI policy in areas where it is still undecided such as funding for health care workers and teachers and assistance to government bodies not under the control of the Cabinet. End summary.

GOI ADOPTS POST-PLC MEETING MEASURES

2. (SBU) COGAT Head General Yossef Mishlev and Brig. Gen. (res.) Baruch Spiegel discussed the future of foreign assistance to the Palestinian Territories during a February 19 meeting with ECON Counselor and USAID Director. Mishlev said that he will coordinate an inter-agency committee to review weekly the situation with the Hamas government and to recommend additional measures to take. He also said that the GOI wants to coordinate closely with the U.S. and international Community to ensure that present humanitarian assistance continues without aiding the Hamas government. Mishlev expressed the hope that plans to address Palestinian environmental sewage/waste runoff into aquifers from which Israel draws water or into the Mediterranean Sea, which could affect Ashkelon's desalination plant intakes, continued. He said that the Israeli Government will continue to allow West Bank workers with permits to enter Israel and work at Israeli settlements inside the West Bank, but will likely cut back on the 17,000 Palestinian businessmen allowed to enter Israel.

3. (SBU) Mishlev outlined the measures the GOI Cabinet has adopted in response to Hamas entering the PLC, including immediately halting revenue transfers, ending assistance, including equipment, for PA security forces, canceling all VIP privileges for PLC members, and stepping up security and physical checks of people and goods passing through the crossings. In addition, Mishlev said, the GOI will call on the international community to stop financing on behalf of the Hamas government, but continue humanitarian support for the Palestinian people. He said the GOI will continue to build the security fence, prevent the movement of Hamas members and supporters between Gaza and the West Bank and within the West Bank, especially to Ramallah, and supply humanitarian supplies to the territories, including water, electricity, sewage treatment, and fuel. General Spiegel added that the GOI will continue with security and other physical upgrades of the Israeli border crossings with Gaza and the West Bank.

Meeting with Donors

4. (SBU) Mishlev and Spiegel held a separate meeting later that day with the Task Force on Project Implementation (TFPI) and other foreign donors, including UNRWA, World Bank, EU/EC, UNICEF, CARE, ICRC, etc. Mishlev had no answer to questions regarding the GOI approach toward "autonomous" parastatals and government bodies that do not fall under the control of Prime Minister or Cabinet Ministries or what would happen to health and education delivery if the funding for the salaries of the 50,000 teachers and health workers is cut off. UNSRSYG De Soto said a detailed review between GOI/MOD and TFPI on behalf of all donors would only be appropriate once the Hamas Cabinet is sworn in and not before. In addition, De Soto said, it is permissible for donors to have bilateral meetings with the GOI, as needed, for coordination, until the Hamas Cabinet is sworn in. The ICRC argued that the GOI is not living up its humanitarian obligations and is trying to

get donors to do that, while simultaneously asking donors not to provide financial/institutional support to key agencies of the PA. The ICRC Representative claimed these actions violate the Oslo accord.

15. (C) Comment: Although the outlines of the GOI policy on assistance to the Palestinians are taking shape, several areas remain undecided. For example, Mishlev had no answer regarding pay for health care workers and teachers or assistance to government bodies not under control of the Prime Minister or Cabinet. The USG may be able to influence GOI policy in this regard, although FM Livni was doubtful in a later discussion with the Ambassador.

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JONES